CHAPTER XI

Local Self-Government

Municipalities.

The Assistant Collector will have little to do with Municipalities officially, as he is not a member of these bodies. But doubtless when you camp at such towns in your sub-division as have Municipalities, the President and the Chief Officer will call on you, and you will discuss local conditions, schemes of improvement, municipal finances, requests for free grant of land for Municipal purposes, etc. It is a good thing to ask the President to accompany you on a walk round the town, as this lets him point out to you the good sanitary work of the Municipality, or you to him the reverse, and you can see any local improvements achieved or sites suggested.

But remember that the President of a Municipality is not a beneficent autocrat, and probably has to condone some inefficiency to retain the good will of the electors who are nearly always averse to taxation. So congratulate him on what the Municipality has managed to accomplish, rather than be caustic about its deficiencies. This of course does not apply to the worst managed Municipalities which you must try to goad into improvement, and failing that, report them to the Collector suggesting supervision by Government till affairs can be put right.

In case a general or special meeting of the Municipality is to be held during the period of your camp, it would be useful, provided you have time, to attend such meeting informally with the permission of the President. The way in which such meetings are conducted will

ordinarily give you a good idea of the capacity and general inclinations of the President, Chief Officer and prominent councillors of the Municipality concerned.

Local Boards.

You will probably have little direct official connection with the District Local Board. But while on tour you should bring to the notice of the Boards any needs of the villagers in the way of well, roads, schools and other matters which are in its sphere, and at the same time you may explain to the villagers that they should make their local member of the Board push their interests in that body, as he is elected to represent *them*, and that they should worry him till he does his duty. In many places the idea still persists that the provision of all needs and amenities is Government's duty, and that Government, and not the Local Board, have the funds for this.

When visiting a village always inspect the water supply, not only for the higher castes, but also for the untouchables and try to get the Local Board or the Village Improvement Committees to take up any improvements required. If the well or tank vests in a local body and not in a private person, see that a notice board, stating that it is open for the use of all castes and classes, is erected and legible, and if it is not, inquire why and report the facts to the local body concerned.

Schools.

The village school you will also visit, in fact you will usually not be allowed to leave it unvisited, and interest shown in it is always appreciated by the masters and the villagers. You have no official duties about the schools, which in the villages are run by the District School Board, an offshoot of the District Local Board, and in

larger towns by the Municipal School Boards, and some appreciative remarks in the visit book are really all that is expected of you. But should you find scheduled caste boys sitting separately from the other children, point out that this is against Government orders and, if there seems opposition to them all sitting together, inform the School Board through the Collector that orders are not complied with.

Village Panchayats.

See the Village Panchayats Manual. These bodies vary very greatly in efficiency, and are—as are all small local self-governing institutions—greatly handicapped by the natural reluctance of the villagers to tax themselves. This must be borne in mind when you find, e.g. filthy dirty streets in a village with a Panchayat, and more progress is probable by encouragement of the efficient Panchayat than by undiscriminating blame of the bad. Any direct help which you can give, e.g. by grant of Government land for school play-ground, manure pits, road widening, etc., will be most valuable. If the President of the District Local Board is also interested in Village Panchayats, probably between the two of you, definite progress can be made in utilizing the Village Panchayat as an instrument of Village Improvement.

Epidemics.

As Assistant Collector you are not in theory responsible for dealing with epidemics for this duty is laid on the local authorities, i.e., the Local Boards and the Municipalities, and on the Public Health Department.

The Bombay Local Boards Prevention of Epidemic Diseases Orders, 1935, published by Government Notification No. 19, dated 24th April 1935, gives the procedure for dealing with an epidemic in the districts.

Briefly, it is that the village officers report immediately to the Mamlatdar, who directs the local Medical Officer to visit the village at once, sending with him a Taluka peon, and, if possible, the Mamlatdar, Avalkarkun or Circle Inspector must accompany the Medical Officer. When the Medical Officer has done what he can in the village, he reports to the President, District Local Board, what he has done and what further measures are necessary. He makes a similar report to the Collector, the Assistant Director of Public Health and the Civil Surgeon. The President, District Local Board, on receipt of such a report has to take any further necessary steps to deal with the outbreak, and to report these steps within 5 days to the Collector who, if he gets no report and considers the steps taken inadequate, then takes such steps as he thinks necessary. This procedure gives no official place to the Assistant Collector.

But in practice you will find that you may have to do much in the matter of epidemics. Village Officers may fail to report cholera promptly, local authorities may be slow in taking effective measures, the responsible head, the President of the District Local Board, may live far away from the infected village, and his staff be inert. The Assistant Director, Public Health, may be occupied with an epidemic elsewhere, and the local Mamlatdar think himself too busy to go in person.

The Assistant Collector must keep the Village Officers up to the mark in the prompt reporting of epidemics and the Mamlatdar, Avalkarkun and local Medical Officer in promptly visiting them. Often immediate measures

will stop the spread of cholera which, if neglected, may infect a whole Taluka.

Whenever possible, yourself visit any village where cholera, plague or small-pox has broken out, and before you go, look up the appropriate action against the disease in the Manual of Village Panchayats (p. 65 seq.) or in the Manual of Vital Statistics and Public Health.

In the case of cholera, especially see that the water supply has been disinfected by permanganate of potash, that the village is being kept clean, and that the village officers have an adequate supply of permanganate of potash pills (incidentally always keep these in your own office for emergencies).

For plague, induce the villagers to evacuate their houses and live in their fields, and persuade as many as possible to be inoculated against the disease.

For small-pox, see that every one is vaccinated or revaccinated.

Work of course in co-operation with the Assistant Director of Public Health and his staff, and with the President and Medical Officers of the Local Board and Municipalities, all of whom will probably be most grateful for the "Revenue Influence" which you and your subordinates can exert to get the public to comply with their instructions. But remember that, however, laudable your or their objects may be, persuasion is better than compulsion, and that you will as a rule get more done by carrying local opinion with you in preventive and remedial measures than otherwise. But compulsion, e.g., in not using infected water supply or in keeping the village clean, is also often needed.

CHAPTER XII

Other Departments

Excise. The Excise Department deals with the taxation and control of intoxicating liquors, opium, and intoxicating drugs. As Assistant Collector you will have little direct concern with the Department, the administration and technical work of which is done by Excise Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors working under a Superintendent of Excise whose charge is of 2 or 3 Districts.

Advisory Committees. But there are Excise Advisory Committees for Districts, Talukas and Towns and the Assistant Collector is Chairman of the Committees in his Sub-division for Municipal towns (other than District Headquarters) and for Talukas and petas. The duties of such Committees are as follows :—

"5. The committee shall advise the Collector with regard to the following classes of licenses, viz., country spirit, toddy, foreign liquor 'on' and 'off' (including wholesale), hemp drugs, hotels, permanent bars at theatres and other places of amusement, refreshment rooms and tree foot-booths located in permanent buildings, on changes in the existing number or location of, and hours of sale at, shops and fixing the strength at which country spirit should be sold....."

Note.—The actual decision on all matters discussed by the committees and sub-committees rests with the Collector subject to the orders of the Commissioner and Government.

"6. The opinion of the committee shall invariably be ascertained at a meeting and not by a circular issued to the members."

(G. R., R. D., No. 4681/24, dated 25th May 1934.)

Excise Administration.

When on tour the local Excise Officers will call on you and you should get from them all the information you can about the Excise position, such as sales, etc. of country liquor, toddy, opium, etc. often indicate matters of importance to your administration.

For instance, if the price of liquor is high, the villager may take to illicit distillation, Excise raids may meet with opposition and a contempt for law and order follow, leading to assaults, dacoities, etc.

Again your Magistrates may be imposing sentences on Excise offenders too light to safeguard the Revenue or they may be sending to jail minor Excise offenders who would be more suitably punished by fine. But remember that defrauding Government of its Excise revenue, is as much a crime as any other theft. If you think that the Excise administration in your charge needs modification, put the matter up to your Collector.

It is useful to get an Excise Officer to show you how a liquor shop is inspected. Also if your charge is in an illicit distillation area, occasionally try a batch of Excise cases yourself, and some time take an opportunity of accompanying an Excise party on a raid. This will give you an idea of the Department's difficulties and, if the raid is successful, of the amount of illicit distillation going on.

Excise work is unpopular, so see that the Revenue officials and the village officers give the Department all assistance, and punish any cases of failure to do so.

In inspecting a Mamlatdar's office always see whether he has let any of the Excise licensees get into arrears without taking the steps laid down for recovery, or getting the Collector's orders for delay.

Co-operative Department.

The Assistant Collector has no direct contact with the Co-operative Department, as in the endeavour to get the movement to stand on its own feet without official propping up, such control as there is, has been reserved to the Co-operative Department with its Assistant Registrars and Auditors, and the rest is left to non-official agency. But, though you do not have to check their accounts and the like, always inquire in villages whether there is a Co-operative Credit Society, who are the office-bearers, how is it doing, has it many bad debts, and the like. The rural Co-operative Credit movement has had a difficult time of late years, partly through over-rapid expansion, and partly owing to agricultural depression, and it needs all the encouragement that can be given to it.

> "....Without in any way becoming an active propagandist (the Revenue officer) should, personally and not through his subordinates, make himself acquainted with the progress of the movement in his district, encouraging and helping those who have formed themselves into societies, enlisting the interest and support of men of influence and wealth, and assisting with his advice those who seek to avail themselves of the benefits of co-operation....."
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> (G. of I., R. D., of Revenue and Agriculture, No. 12/287/1, dated 17th June 1914.)

Urban Co-operative Societies are not likely to come much in your way, but anything in the way of a Co-operative Marketing Society will repay careful study. Co-operative producers' societies, which should cut the middleman's profits, are obviously a most desirable factor in Village Improvement work, especially to secure

for the cultivators the profit of improved agriculture, poultry-keeping, etc. But such are difficult to make succeed owing to vested interests, the inexperience of producers in trade, the pressure of the money-lending middleman, etc. and therefore in your efforts for Village Improvement do not be led into overhasty promises of profits to the producers if they start, e.g. a Sales Society for the disposal of Rhode Island Reds' eggs.

But a well run Society whether Credit, Sales or any other kind—is a most valuable asset to a village, not only in material profit, but in economic morale, and all you can do to encourage sound Societies will be useful towards the work of Village reconstruction.

Factories Act.

The Chief Inspector of Factories has provided the following note.

"The Factories Act applies to any premises including the precincts thereof whereon twenty or more workers are working, or were working on any day of the preceeding twelve months, and in any part of which a manufactory process is being carried on with the aid of power, or is ordinarily so carried on. It also applies to other places which have been specially notified by Government.

Though under the Factories Act, the Assistant Collector as a Sub-Divisional Magistrate is an Ex-Officio Factory Inspector, with a right of entry into any factory, his powers are limited to an examination of the premises and of the notices, registers and muster rolls, to be satisfied that the restrictions on the employment of labour are observed.

A notice has to be posted in every factory (Sections 39 and 55) showing the period of work of all adults and children. If a factory works long hours the workers

must be suitably grouped. At any time the group or relay that should be working will be known from the notice. The group or relay period must be entered against every person's name in the register, and it is an offence (Section 42) to work any person in contravention of the notice and the periods of work shown in the register (Ginning factories work long machinery hours and surprise visits are very necessary). In checking, therefore, the best course is immediately to take the names of the persons who are actually working, with a note of the class of work being done and afterwards compare with the register and notice. It is advisable not to waste time in the taking of the names as those working in contravention of the notice will vanish at once. The Factories Act, subject to certain exemptions for engine and boiler staffs, etc. which need not unduly worry you, permits a 54-hour week for adults in perennial factories, a 56-hour week in continuous production factories, and a 60-hour week in seasonal factories of which cotton gins and presses are the best example (Section 54). So far as male adults are concerned the maximum daily hours have been fixed at 10 in all factories other than seasonal factories in which the maximum may be 11 (Section 56). Women may not be employed for more than 10 hours a day under any circumstances, children may not be employed for more than 5 hours a day and must be passed by the Certifying Surgeon who is almost invariably a Government Medical Officer (Sections 50, 52 and 54). Adolescents, that is to say, persons between the ages of 15 and 17 must be certified and only those who are certified fit may be employed adult hours [Section 53 (1)]. Very few children are employed in factories now-a-days. Women and children

may not be employed from November 1st to March 31st before 6-30 a.m. and after 7-30 a.m. For the remainder of the year the times are 6-0 a.m. and 7-0 a.m. respectively. Surprise visits before and after these hours are of the utmost value to prevent abuses (Sections 45 (*1*) (*b*) and 54). The more remote the factory, the more valuable the visit. The full-time Inspectors pay a fair number of such surprise visits but they are handicapped by paucity of staff and difficulties of touring. They institute a number of prosecutions year by year for such irregularities and more assistance from Sub-Divisional Magistrate would be welcomed by the Factory Department.

Owing to serious accidents to women in cotton pressing factories from fires caused by openers, Section 29 requires the erection of a partition between the feed and delivery ends of the machine and the employment of women is limited to the feed end, i.e., the mixing room side. If any breach is detected, the Chief Inspector of Factories should be informed. Owing to accidents to small infants, the admission of such between the ages of 2 and 12 to the machinery portions of cotton ginning factories and to match and explosive factories has been prohibited by Rule 56.

The interior of cotton ginning factories must be lighted at night either by electricity or, if candles are used, there must be at least one per two gins (Rule 28). In checking at night, therefore, any breach of this rule should be reported. It is also an offence under Rule 40 to use vapour pressure lamps in the interior of ginning factories.

An abstract of the Act in English and the vernaculars has to be posted in a conspicuous place in all factories (Section 76). The object is to ensure that workers are

acquainted with the Law. There is a tendency to keep the abstract out of sight. It is usual for Ex-Officio Inspectors to obtain the sanction of the District Magistrate before instituting proceedings under any of the labour sections of the Act, but the Chief Inspector of Factories may be consulted in any of the other matters indicated in the note.

The Factories Act and Rules and the various forms are printed in one publication which should be in your office."

Irrigation works are broadly speaking classifiable into two types—(1) tanks and canals for which Capital and Revenue Accounts are kept and which are commonly called "*First Class Works*", and (2) small tanks and bandharas for which neither Capital nor Revenue Accounts are kept and which are commonly called "*Second Class Works*". Second class works are again of two types—(*a*) those notified as second class irrigation works under Section 73 of the Bombay Irrigation Act, 1879 (Bom. VII of 1879), and (*b*) those which have not been so notified. Irrigation.

The management and administration of Irrigation from first class works are governed by the provisions of the Irrigation Act and the rules framed thereunder, viz., the Bombay Canal Rules, 1934. These works are fully in charge of the Irrigation Department.

The management and administration of irrigation from second class works of type (*a*) is governed by part X of the Bombay Irrigation Act, 1879, and the rules framed thereunder. These works are in charge of the Irrigation Department for special repairs and improvements. Irrigation from second class works of type (*b*) is regulated according to the Record of

Rights. The administration of both types is in charge of the Revenue Department.

The management and administration of Irrigation from works in charge of the Irrigation Department is the concern of that Department. As Assistant Collector you should, however, familiarise yourself with the Irrigation Rules applicable to the canals in your Sub-Division so that, if a villager complains against the Irrigation Department, the knowledge of these rules will enable you to explain to the complainant the Irrigation Department's action and its necessity.

Do not be too credulous in accepting allegations against the Irrigation Department, as the irrigator being ignorant of scientific irrigation theories sometimes sees, or affects to see, in necessary precautions merely the zulum of the unfee'd subordinate. If, however, you should happen to come across cases where the Irrigation Department subordinates may seem to have departed from the rules, report such departure from the rules to the Executive Engineer.

"For individual grievances the complainants should be referred to the Executive Engineer. About the fairness of distribution, the sufficiency of supply, the suitability of rates, the remission of rates, the competence or honesty of the management and other such general questions, the Assistant Collector may form an opinion, being careful not to interfere with the departmental control, and may communicate it to the Executive Engineer or, if of major importance, to the Collector."

Occasionally accompany the local Sub-Divisional Officer on a visit of inspection so as to acquaint yourself

more thoroughly with the system of working, and ask him to be present at any agricultural demonstration that may be organised or at Jamabandi, and to give a short lecture on local irrigation problems and answer any questions of the cultivators.

In the case of second class works of the type (*a*) the Assistant Collector should see that the cultivators fulfil the obligations laid upon them under the provisions of Section 84 of the Bombay Irrigation Act, 1879, and you should yourself enquire into the complaints of short supply from such works.

Forests.

"Forest Administration is a branch of general administration, and responsibility for a wise and efficient management of forests rests as much with the Collectors and their Assistants as with the Officers of the Forest Department."

(Compilation of Revenue Standing Orders, p. 482.)

"In providing a special establishment for forest purposes Government did not intend and cannot allow the ordinary executive to be relieved of any responsibility which before attached to it; it is as much a part of the duty of Village and Revenue and Police Officers to protect Government property in trees now as it was before trees were transferred to the Forest Department."

(Compilation of Revenue Standing Orders, p. 481.)

"In its management of forests the ease and contentment of the people is an object of greater solicitude to Government than the realization of revenue, and while no relaxation of precautions necessary for the conservation and reproduction of the timber and firewood

supplies can be permitted and the Forest Officers must be vigorously supported in resisting unauthorised encroachments, Government have no desire to increase their forest revenue by the curtailment of conceded privileges or of local supply or by the levy of excessive charges for grass and other minor forest produce. The benefit of any revenue so obtained would be altogether insufficient to countervail the hardship and irritation that would be caused were the ryots unduly pressed in the matter of obtaining rab and firewood, grazing for their cattle, or grass for thatching and other household purposes."

(Compilation of Revenue Standing Orders, p. 483.)

The present system of Forest Administration is summarised in Appendix "G", and the Assistant Collector has no concern with the professional forest administration. But you will find that Forests affect your work in various ways. Villagers will come to you asking you to get them more grazing, more wood, and other privileges, or will complain of Forest Subordinates' highhandedness in impounding their cattle etc., and unless you have a working knowledge of the general administration of the Forests and of the rules and regulations concerning those in your sub-division, you may be led into ill-judged controversy with the Forest Officers. Therefore take every opportunity you can of learning about the Forests, camp if possible at intervals with the Divisional Forest Officer and go round with him for a day or two in the jungles, call on the Conservator if he camps anywhere near you and discuss any problems which you and the Divisional Forest Officer have not been able to settle between you.

You can probably do more by explaining personally to the Divisional Forest Officer any real difficulties which you find the villagers experience, than by writing, and you will probably learn much of why seemingly irksome restrictions have to be imposed to protect valuable public property.

While seeing that all grievances of the villagers are brought to notice, insist that your subordinates afford all necessary help to the Forest Department Officials. The knowledge that the Revenue Department and the Forest Department are combined, both in redressing Forest grievances and in enforcing Forest regulations, will do much to ensure the smooth administration of the Forest Department.

The Range Forest Officers in your sub-division will call on you when you are in camp in their Ranges; discuss with them the working of their forests and any difficulties that they may be meeting with.

You will find that big game shooting has the great advantage of bringing you into close contact with the administration of the forests, with the Forest Officers and with the forest tribes, and you can learn a great deal of most useful knowledge when out for Shikar.